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DEPT FOR DRL, INL, EUR/SCE, AND EUR/SSA, NSC FOR BRAUN,
USUN FOR DREW SCHUFLETOWSKI, USOSCE FOR STEVE STEGER

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SUBJECT: UNMIK HEAD OF MISSION RESIGNS

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Classified By: COM PHILIP S. GOLDBERG FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Soren Jessen-Petersen has resigned as Kosovo's Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) and head of the U.N. Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), effective June 30. Principal Deputy SRSG (PDSRSG) Steven Schook will become acting SRSG if a replacement is not in place by the end of the month. Jessen-Petersen expects his successor to remain in Kosovo for one year after his departure, to include a six-month transition period to European Union structures. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) U.N. Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Soren Jessen-Petersen announced on June 12 that he will be leaving UNMIK on June 30. He said in a press release that this was the "time to be with my family in Washington," (NOTE: His wife has been ill and receiving treatment in Washington for some time. END NOTE.) Jessen-Petersen was fifth in a series of SRSGs posted to Pristina following the end of the 1998-1999 conflict. Jessen-Petersen told the press only that he would be visiting European capitals in the coming days, but detailed in a follow-on meeting with the heads of Pristina diplomatic liaison offices that he would leave today (June 12) for a trip to Brussels, Vienna and New York. He will then visit his family in Washington and said he plans to spend a few days in Kosovo before leaving his post permanently on June 30. He said he expected his replacement to remain in place for the coming year, to include a six-month transition period to European Union structures.

13. (C) After a series of SRSGs who were alternately publicly reviled or at the very least seen as less-than-effective, Jessen-Petersen leaves behind a legacy of popular ethnic Albanian support. During his two-year tenure, UNMIK's pillar structure (Pillar I) Justice and Police, Pillar II) Civil Affairs, Pillar III) OSCE, and Pillar IV) Economic Affairs) dissolved and downsized, supposedly to a more locally-managed, streamlined process, and he made many friends through his rational diplomatic demeanor. While he served as SRSG, the Standards for Kosovo process was re-focused and energized and he presented two key positive standards assessments to the UNSC. He oversaw 2004 general

elections deemed free and fair only months after the March 2004 ethnically-motivated riots which damaged 1000 residences and churches and left 20 people dead; the privatization of more than 100 communist-era state businesses; three stable changes of government; an indictment of a sitting prime minister, Ramush Haradinaj, on war crimes charges by the International Criminal Tribunal of the former Yugoslavia; and the death of Kosovo's first president, Ibrahim Rugova, while still in office.

¶4. (C) Jessen-Petersen did have his detractors, however. Key decisions on telecommunications and energy languished under his watch. Despite Jessen-Petersen's extensive experience with the UNHCR since the 1970s, he delayed a decision on removing refugee Roma from lead-contaminated camps in place since 1999 until pushed by negative international press. During his second year in office, he was criticized by ethnic Serbs as being a friend of the ethnic Albanian cause of Kosovo independence, especially after his public praise for then Prime Minister Haradinaj ("my friend, my partner") when the latter surrendered to The Hague.

¶5. (C) COMMENT. Soren Jessen-Petersen carried out his job admirably during very difficult circumstances in his almost two years as the head of UNMIK. The transition to EU oversight of Kosovo (ref A), however, requires a clean break in public imagination between the SRSG role and the new leader of an international presence in Kosovo; his possible replacement by an EU head as has been discussed by some in EU circles will not accomplish this needed break in position and function. END COMMENT.

¶6. (U) U.S. Office Pristina clears this cable for release,

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with exception of paragraph 4, to U.N. Special Envoy for Kosovo Status Talks Martti Ahtisaari.
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